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SUPPORT

FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Other matters

NOTE FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO THE MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

Note by the Administrator

At the request of the Secretary-General, I am circulating a note from the Secretary-General to the Members of the Governing Council dated 22 April 1987, regarding recommendation 15 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations.

22 April 1987

NOTE FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO THE MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

1. In section III of its report to the General Assembly (A/41/49), the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations dealt with the structure of the Secretariat. The Group indicated that it had examined the present organizational structure, bearing in mind that the aim should be to enhance the capacity of the Organization to implement the tasks entrusted to it as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible.

2. After noting the number of posts at the Under- and Assistant Secretary-General levels financed under the United Nations regular budget (58), the Group inter alia pointed out that:

> "... In addition, there are, respectively, 7 and 23 posts at these levels that are financed from extra-budgetary sources. These posts include those of the United Nations-affiliated bodies, such as the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund. The establishment of this large number of top-echelon posts has inevitably resulted in dispersion of responsibility, as well as diffuse lines of authority, accountability and communication. A substantial reduction in the number of these posts, together with clearer and simpler lines of authority and responsibility, will have a positive impact on the Organization's ability to carry out the tasks entrusted to it. ..."

3. Accordingly, in recommendation 15 of its report, the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts indicated that "a substantial reduction in the number of staff members at all levels, but particularly in the higher echelons, is desirable". To that end, it recommended that the "number of regular budget posts at the level of Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General should be reduced by 25 per cent within a period of three years or less".

4. In its resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986, the General Assembly decided that the recommendations of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts "should be implemented by the Secretary-General and the relevant organs and bodies of the United Nations in the light of the findings of the Fifth Committee and subject to ..." certain specific considerations. In regard to recommendation 15, the General Assembly resolution states as follows:

> "(b) The percentages referred to in recommendation 15, which were arrived at in a pragmatic manner, should be regarded as targets in the formulation of the Secretary-General's plans to be submitted to the General Assembly for implementation of the recommendation; further, the Secretary-General is requested to implement this recommendation with flexibility in order to avoid, inter alia, negative impact on programmes and on the structure and composition of the Secretariat, bearing in mind the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity of the staff, with due regard to equitable geographical distribution;".

5. The Secretary-General wishes to bring the above to the attention of the Governing Council for its consideration and to indicate that he is required to report to the General Assembly on the implementation of this recommendation as on others made by the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts.